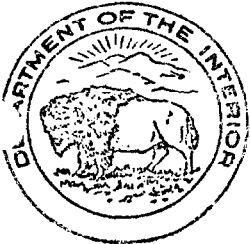


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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### FEDERAL AID HELPS WILD TURKEY RESTORATION

The restoration of wild turkeys on their hereditary ranges is one of the most promising projects being undertaken by states with the help of Federal Aid funds, Albert M. Day, Fish and Wildlife Service director, reported today to Interior Secretary Oscar L. Chapman.

While 13 states have used Federal funds provided by the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act for wild turkey re-establishment projects -- with a total of 6,168 turkeys transplanted in 10 years -- Mr. Day cites Colorado as a good example of successful management practice. Colorado, which had not had an open season on turkeys since 1899, had a three-day season last October -- permitting a bag of one per hunter. Reports on this open season indicated that 20 percent of the hunters got their turkey, as compared to the national average of about 16 percent for hunters of these prized fowl.

Since 1943, when Colorado began extensive trapping and transplanting of wild turkeys with the aid of Pittman-Robertson funds, the populations of these birds in the state have risen from 6,000 to 18,000.

The large Merriam's, or "mountain", turkeys native to Colorado were once very abundant, but excessive hunting and the destruction of habitat by man threatened their existence. In common with many other states, principally in the South, Colorado began in the late 1930s and early 1940s to build up its turkey populations.

Colorado's management program consisted of three main elements: the trapping of predatory animals like coyotes and bobcats off of ranges where turkeys were to be introduced, live-trapping and transplanting of wild birds to the new ranges, and the maintenance of a supply of wild turkeys on the Devil Creek ranch for restocking purposes. This state-owned, 600-acre, natural turkey range was acquired and developed with Pittman-Robertson funds to preserve the large portion of the once declining turkey population in Colorado.

The turkey is a wide-ranging bird -- requiring abundant food supplies (acorns, seeds, berries and insects) to maintain its great weight, and sufficient cover and protection from predators and man to breed and survive. These specialized requirements limit the number of areas in which turkeys may be introduced. In Colorado, wild-trapped stock was introduced chiefly in inaccessible canyons where the requirements of food and cover were met. Wild turkeys once ranged from Ontario (along the northern shore of Lake Erie) to Mexico, and from Maine and the Southern states through the midwest to Arizona.

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